

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' ENGLISH WORD SPELLING ABILITY  
BY USING WORD OLYMPICS GAME**

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**RESEARCH PAPER**

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# IMPROVING STUDENTS' ENGLISH WORD SPELLING ABILITY BY USING WORD OLYMPICS GAME

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**Abstract:** This research is conducted to investigate how well Word Olympics Game improves the students' English word spelling ability at the fifth grade-A students of SD Bruder Nusa Indah Pontianak. The method used is a classroom action research in which the researcher taught English word spelling through Word Olympics Game to improve their word spelling ability. This technique gave students opportunities to write the English words repeatedly, so, they had interesting experiences and accustomed to English words. Researcher used field notes, written test and the interpretation of students' score to collect data. The results showed that students' scores were getting better at every cycle where the average score of the tests were increased significantly from 56.3 in the first, 67.0 in the second and 78.6 in the third cycle. That proved that the action hypothesis of this research was accepted. The use of Word Olympics Game was pretty well improves the students' word spelling ability.

***Key Words: WOG, Students' Word Spelling Ability***

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kebaikan Word Olympics Game dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis ejaan kata dalam bahasa Inggris pada SD Bruder Nusa Indah kelas V- A Pontianak. Metode yang digunakan adalah Penelitian Tindakan Kelas dimana peneliti mengajarkan ejaan kata bahasa Inggris menggunakan WOG untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mereka dalam menulis ejaan kata. Teknik ini memberikan kesempatan kepada siswa untuk menulis ejaan kata bahasa Inggris secara berulang-ulang sehingga mereka mendapat pengalaman yang menarik dan terbiasa dengan ejaan kata dalam bahasa Inggris. Dalam pengumpulan data peneliti menggunakan catatan lapangan, tes tertulis dan menginterpretasikan hasil tes mereka. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa hasil tes siswa semakin membaik di setiap minggunya dimana nilai rata-rata nilainya meningkat secara signifikan dari 56.3 di siklus pertama, 67.0 di siklus kedua dan 78.6 di siklus ketiga. Itu membuktikan bahwa hipotesis tindakan penelitian ini diterima. Penggunaan WOG cukup baik dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis ejaan kata bahasa Inggris siswa

***Kata Kunci: WOG, kemampuan mengeja kata bahasa Inggris***

Learning vocabulary might not be separated from learning about words and learning about words has a close relationship with learning about the word spelling and learning vocabulary also means learning the printed form of words. Kamil (2005:3) stated that words come in at least two forms: oral and print. Knowledge of words also comes in at least two forms, receptive-that which we can understand or recognize- and productive-the vocabulary we use when we write or speak. Oral vocabulary is the set of words for which we know the meanings when we speak or read orally. Print vocabulary consists of those words for which the meaning is known when we write or read silently. The printed forms of words related to the spelling of words. The spelling itself means the forming of words from letters according to accepted usage. For example, the word "buffalo" consists of 'b', 'u', 'f', 'f', 'a', 'l', 'l', and 'o' letters. This usually called spelling. Carten (2007:21) also stated that Learning vocabulary is largely about remembering, and students generally need to see, say, and write newly learned words many times before they can be said to have learned them. It means that to be able to remember English words learners need to memorize the words that they have learnt and get opportunity not just to hear and say the words but also to write those words repeatedly. When writing words, the correct spelling might not to be neglected. If we write the words incorrectly of course it shows that we are poor or bad in spelling. So, it is necessary for students to be involved with the English words and write the words in correct spelling as frequent as possible so they will be familiar with the words and also with the spelling of words.

As an English teacher, the writer faced problem in teaching the language where many of the Fifth Grade-A students of SD Bruder Nusa Indah, still have problem in learning English vocabulary, especially in their words spelling ability. They often make mistake in spelling the English words such as omitting one or more letters, for example they write 'bok' for 'book', 'Girafe' for 'giraffe' or 'sapener' for 'sharpener' and changing some letters into Indonesian spelling, such as 'ticer' for 'teacher' or 'dokter' for 'doctor' and 'tabel' for 'table'. Another phenomenon, some of the students may be able to mention the words, however, they sometimes can not write the spelling correctly, for example, teacher shows the picture of elephant, and asks them what picture it is, they know that it is an elephant but they can not write it correctly whereas in fact they have been learning that word from the first grade. In other words, English is introduced firstly in the first grade but they still made mistakes in the word spelling when they are already in the fifth grade.

The problem above seems to be a common thing if we talk about learning English at elementary school and that is the fact that the writer faces in teaching English. This problem emerges because there are some differences between the spelling of English and Indonesian language. English language has so many different ways to spell which are not found in students' first language or in Indonesian language. For example, English words that sound the same but are spelled differently such as byte, bite,

bight, or words that do not sound like they are spelled such as one, do, late, who, great, etc. are not exist in students' first language spelling.

Moreover, English is not their mother tongue or their first language, so it makes them seldom hear, speak, read and write the language in their daily life. In other words, they are still unfamiliar with the language. That is why the writer thought that teachers need to give opportunities to students to practice their vocabularies acquired, included practice the word spelling in written form as frequently as possible to make them familiar with the English words.

Practicing English word spelling might be given to the students by using various techniques which are favorable to make them happy and eager to learn the language. So, they will not think that learning English is difficult or frightening. That is the reason why the writer thinks that games are suitable and applicable to accomplish the teaching learning process. The using of games offer advantages for students. The games offer students to be relaxed and enjoy the teaching learning process. Students get an opportunity to acquire the language in interesting situation and also get a chance to involve frequently with the words. The game which is used to improve students' English words spelling ability is Word Olympics Game or WOG. WOG is a kind of language game which is played by drawing a table which consists of some columns and rows on a piece of paper or on a board, Each column is headed by different category of noun (animal, plant, professions etc.) Then, the players have to fill the empty spaces with names of words beginning with the appropriate letters which are taken from “ **Initial Words** ” and with the letter patterns given as clues. This game is intended to give opportunities to students to practice the word spelling in written form especially for ‘common nouns’ which have been learnt before, so they will be familiar with those words and remember the correct spelling of words letter by letter. This research is done for the fifth grade-A students of SD Bruder Nusa Indah Pontianak under the consideration that they still have problems in their word spelling ability. Spelling is the forming of words from letters according to accepted usage. A sequence of letters composing a word; a statement of rules or conventions on how words are to be written, great knowledge about or understanding of a particular thing. Some of the linguistics define the term of word variously. Hornby (1994:12) said that words are the sounds or combination of sounds (written or printed symbols) forming a unit of the language or vocabulary of a language while Gathered (1990:6) said that word is a combination in morphology, of phonemes and, in grammar, of morphemes. Besides, Eastwood ( 1994:3 ) stated that there are eight main word classes, they are: verb, noun, adjective, adverb, preposition, determiner, pronoun and conjunction. There are many techniques in teaching spelling. Holt, Rineheart and Winston (2000:270) stated that there are good spelling habits which can be applied in teaching word spelling. They are: pronounce words carefully,

spell by syllables, use a dictionary and proofread for careless spelling errors. Always re-read what you have written so that you can eliminate careless spelling errors, such as typos (*trail* for *trial*), missing letters (*goverment* for *government*), and the misuse of similar sounding words (*except* for *accept*).

Boston (1998:43) said that list of words are useful in the teaching and learning of spelling when they are organized purposefully. The most purposeful general lists are those organized according to the four forms of spelling knowledge, that is: phonological knowledge; how words sound, visual knowledge; how words look, morphemic knowledge; how words change form and etimological knowledge; where words come from. Besides, Jill Machin, Devon (2009:1) mentioned one of the techniques in teaching spelling is 'look for letter patterns.' Write down groups of words which have the same letter pattern. The patterns might be at the beginning, middle, or end of a word. You may find it helpful to use colour. For examples: All these words have the pattern 'ch', they are: Church; champion; choir; cheat; and chasm; Should sh (in green) ould (in purple); Could c (in blue) ould (in purple); and Would w (in red) ould (in purple)

## RESEARCH METHOD

Since this research is designed to investigate how well WOG Game improves the students' English word spelling ability, the appropriate method of this research is classroom action research. Kemmis and Mc Taggart cited in Burns (2009:7) stated that action research typically involves four broad phases in a cycle of research. The first cycle may become a continuing, or iterative, spiral of cycles which recur until the action of researcher has achieved a satisfactory outcome and feels it is time to stop. The four broad phases in a cycle are: 1) Planning; in this phase we identify a problem or issue and develop a plan of action in order to bring about improvements in a specific area of the research context. This is a forward-looking phase where we consider: i) what kind of investigation is possible within the realities and constraints of our teaching situation; and ii) what potential improvements we think are possible, 2) Action; the plan is carefully considered one which involves some deliberate interventions into our teaching situation that we put into action over an agreed period of time. The intervention are 'critically informed' as we question our assumptions about the current situation and plan new and alternative ways of doing things, 3) Observation; this phase involves us in observing systematically the effects of the action and documenting the context, actions, and opinions of those involved. It is a data collection phase where we use 'open-eyed' and 'open-minded' tools to collect information about what is happening and 4) Reflection; at this point, we reflect on, evaluate and describe the effects of the action in order to make sense of what has happened and to understand the issue we have explored more clearly. We may decide to do further cycles of Action Research to improve the situation even more, or to share

the ‘story’ of our research with others as part of our ongoing professional development.

And the action hypothesis of this research was the use of Word Olympics Game is pretty well improves students’ word spelling ability. In order to test this action hypothesis, the researcher used measurement technique, field notes and classroom observation. The observation sheet is required to observe the students participation in their classroom activities, field notes are required to jot down the important thing happened in the classroom and measurement techniques was needed was needed to know the students’ improvements in learning word spelling through Word Olympics Game. The subject of this research were 42 fifth grade-A students at SD Bruder Nusa Indah Pontianak in academic year 2011/ 2012.

### **Instruments.**

The instruments which were used in this research are WOG models and measurement test. The measurement test of the students’ English word spelling ability was carried out using multiple choice and completion questions form. In applying the test, the researcher constructs 20 items: 10 items in form of multiple choice and 10 items in completion questions form. The students’ correct answer for multiple choice form are awarded one mark, meanwhile, the students’ wrong answer are given zero mark. The students’ correct answer for completion questions form are awarded two mark, meanwhile one mark for the students’ uncomplete letters answer and zero mark for students’ wrong answer.

### **Procedures**

The procedures which were applied in teaching learning process are:

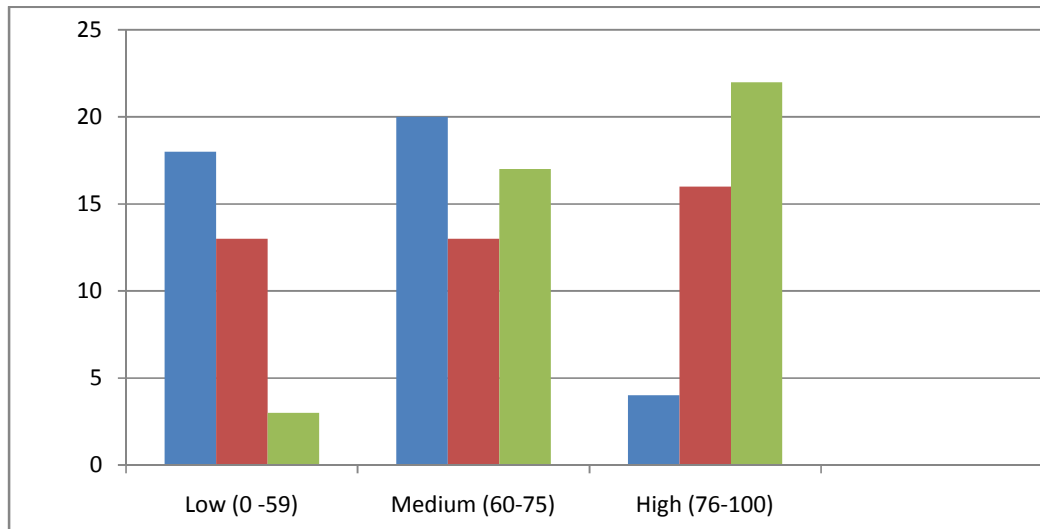
- 1) Warming up activity; teacher asked some questions to students related to the topics which have been taught before and gave a brief explanation to prepare them to be ready to the teaching learning activity,
- 2) Teacher stuck the WOG model on the blackboard and gave an explanation how to play the games and make sure that all students understand what they should do with the game,
- 3) Teacher stuck picture cards randomly to lead students to get the answer,
- 4) Teacher divided students into four or five groups (one sitting line as one group),
- 5) Teacher asked each member of the groups to fill the empty spaces (column) of WOG model with the names of nouns beginning with the appropriate letters which were taken from “**initial words**” alternately,
- 6) Students together with teacher observed and checked the spelling of the words which have been written,
- 7) Students practiced the game repeatedly in big or lessen group members or in pairs,
- 8) Teacher gave assessment to measure students’ achievement in multiple choice and completion forms at the end of the meeting,

There were three cycles done in this research and researcher conducted an assessment or test at every cycles. Then, researcher compared the result of the tests to see whether there is an improvement of the students' spelling ability or not. Besides, the observation sheets and field notes also used to get a description of the use of the game in teaching learning activity. The use of the game in this research was intended to give students opportunities to write the spelling of words as frequently as possible, so they can remember the correct spelling of those words.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

This research was done in the fifth grade-A students of SD Bruder Nusa Indah Pontianak. The researcher collected the data from the students' test results on the first, second and third cycles. The test result in every cycles could be seen in graphics 1.



Graphic 1

### The Description of Students' Test Interpretation

Note: Blue = first cycle; red = second cycle; green= third cycle

The criteria to be used in the students, individual score according to David P Haris, cited on Ika Marizah (2003:32)

Based on graphics1, It could be said that the number of students who are categorized as having low result of the test are 18 students, having medium test result are 20 students and having high test result are 4 students. Then, in the second cycle, the number of students who are categorized as having low result of the test are decreased became 13



students, while the number of the students who are having medium test result are also decreased became 13 students, but there is a significant changing on the number of students who are categorized as having high test result which are increased became 16 students. And in the third cycle, the number of the students who are categorized as having low test result are decreased again became 4 students, while the number of the students who are having medium test result are increased became 17 students, and the number of students who are having high test result are increased became 21 students.

Table 1  
The description of Students' Test Results

	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
Total Score	2367	2813	3300
Average Score	56.3	67.0	78.6

The further analysis on students' individual score (Table 2) showed that the total score was 2367 in the first cycle, 2813 in the second cycle and 3300 in the third cycle while the average score was 56.3 in the first test, 67.0 in the second cycle and 78.6 in the third cycle. This indicated that there was a significant improvement of the students' test result.

In order to get a description of the use of the game in teaching learning activity, researcher also used a classroom observation sheets. The result of observation sheets could be seen on Table 2.

Table 2  
The Description of Classroom Observation Sheets Result

No.	The aspects being observed	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
1	Do students look interested and enthusiastic in learning word spelling by using Word Olympics Game?	√	√	√
2	Do all students understand how to play the game well?	X	√	√
3	Do all students involve actively in learning word spelling by using Word Olympic Game?	X	X	√
4	Are there any misspelling found?	√	√	√
5	Is WOG able to stimulate students' curiosity?	√	√	√

6	Is the result of learning word spelling by using WOG satisfied?	X	X	√
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Based on the observation sheet results, the first meeting showed that all students looked interested and enthusiastic in learning word spelling using Word Olympics Game. It could be seen from their struggle for getting their turn in the game so it made the class noisy. There are still some students who did mistakes in playing the game where they wrote the names of professions which were not suitable with the initial letter provided. That indicated that they did not understand teacher's explanation well, they just took a look at the heading category of profession not at the initial letters and the letter pattern given. Therefore, teacher showed them what mistakes they did, and they realized their mistakes immediately after teacher explained it. Not all students involved actively in the game, because there are still some students who just kept silent in the class, they just sat while watching another students did the game. In this phase, misspelling happened frequently where they wrote 'butcer', 'arcitect', 'briklayer', 'fisermen', 'posmen', and 'mecanic' for 'butcher', 'architect', 'bricklayer', 'fisherman', 'postman' and 'mechanic'. So, researcher reminded students about the word patterns which have been taught before and used those misspelling words in the next meeting. And, the result of learning word spelling by using WOG was not satisfied where the average of the students' test result was only 56.3. In the second meeting, the students still looked interested and enthusiastic in learning word spelling by using WOG and generally, the students showed good changes where all students looked understand how to play the game well. It could be seen from their performance where there was no more student who made the same mistakes in playing the game as in the first cycle. In order to activate all students to play the game, then, teacher divided the groups into smaller group members which consist of four or five students only in the second cycle. However, there were still some students who did not involve in the game. They just relied on their friends to play the game. Then, teacher changed or reduced the number of group members. Misspelling of the previous words which were taken from the first cycle (architect, bricklayer, fisherman, postman and mechanic) was not happened except the word 'butcher' and 'architect'. There were two students who wrote 'buther' for 'butcher' and 'arckitect' for 'architect'. So, researcher inserted those words again in the next meeting. Meanwhile, there were misspelling words for the new words which were inserted in the second cycle of the game. The misspelling words are 'oculish' for 'oculist', 'assitant' for 'assistant', 'jurnalist' for 'journalist'. Then, those words would be inserted in the next cycle. There was not a significant difficulty in playing WOG after the game was played in a small groups. Moreover, there was a little good progress in the students' test result where the average of the second test result was increased from 56.3 in the first cycle became 67.0 in the

second cycle. In the third observation, or in the third cycle, the students also still looked interested and enthusiastic in learning word spelling by using WOG. It could be seen from their ways in asking more and more chances to be able to play WOG in the classroom. In this phase, researcher changed the way of playing the game where she distributed WOG models to all groups which consist only two students each group. In this way, all students did the game in pairs, so they all involved actively in doing the games in their own pairs. There were not misspelling words which are taken from the misspelling words from the second cycle. But, there were three misspelling words of the new words given in the third cycle, they were: 'Shokeper', 'scluptor' and 'pediatrician' for 'shopkeeper', 'sculptor' and 'pediatrician'. Word Olympics Game can stimulate students' curiosity. It can be seen from their questions about what kind of category would be taught by the teacher in the next meeting and they also wanted to know whether they might play the WOG again in the next meeting or not. The average of the test result was increased significantly where the average of the test result was 78.6 in the third

## **Discussion**

From the data analysis and research finding, it can be seen that the students made an improvement from the first meeting to the third meeting of the cycle. The score of students test indicated that the students' improvement was getting better and better. It could be seen from the average of the students' test results which were increased from 56.3 in the first cycle, 67.0 in the second cycle and 78.6 in the third cycle. So, it could be said that learning word spelling by using WOG gave a significant improvement. Students' ability in word spelling also increased. It could be seen from the number of misspelling words which were reduced time by time. Besides, students learned the letter pattern of the word they could also practice writing the words repeatedly. For elementary school students, repetition had an important role in teaching English word spelling and WOG can be used as a useful tool to do that. They learnt and wrote the spelling of words in interesting situation by using WOG repeatedly and gradually they would be able to remember the spelling of the words given.

Furthermore, it indicated that the action hypothesis of this research was accepted. The use of Word Olympics Game was pretty well improves the students' word spelling ability. However, repetition in writing the spelling of words is important enough for students and WOG can be used as one of the solution which can be applied in the classroom.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since this research was designed to investigate the improvement of students' capability in writing the correct word spelling by using Word Olympics Game to the second semester of the fifth grade-A students of SD Bruder Nusa Indah Pontianak in academic year 2011/2012, the researcher

draws some conclusions as follows: 1) Word Olympics Game gives students repetitious practice in writing the spelling of words and this repetitions can make them accustomed to the English words and memorize the correct spelling of those words, 2) At every cycle, the students show great interest in playing the game. They also show their progress in their test result little by little every week. In the first cycle the average of the test result was 56.3, then in the second cycle was 67.0 and in the third cycle was 78.6. That proved that the use of WOG gave a good influence to the students' test result and can improve students' English word spelling ability, 3) By using Word Olympics Game, there is a significant progress happened at every cycle, the number of students who are categorized as having low result of the test are decreased from 18, 14 to 4 students. While the number of students who are having high test result are increased from 4, 16 to 21 students. And the number of students who are categorized as having medium test result are fluctuating positively from 20, 12, to 17 students. It means that the use of WOG is good enough in improving Students' English word spelling ability of the Fifth Grade-A Students of SD Bruder Nusa Indah.

In addition, there are some advantages and weaknesses in using WOG. The advantages of Word Olympics Game are: 1) WOG can cover many teaching topics such as animals, fruits and vegetables, things in the kitchen, professions, etc, 2) WOG can be used as a tool of practicing word spelling in interesting situation and which is easy to be applied in the classroom, 3) WOG can be played in a small group members or in big group members, 4) WOG can motivate students to memorize the correct words spelling. Besides, there is also the weaknesses of applying WOG in the classroom that is it takes much time and slightly hard to play it if students do not have enough motivation.

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